



November 19, 2021

Dear K-12 Data Task Force Members and Data Systems Modernization Project Stakeholders:

My last day with the OPI will be next Friday, November 26th.

Three years ago, I took on the role of Chief Data Officer at the OPI to advance an idea: technology was not as important as the people who used it and the data which it held. I've worked hard over the last three years to lay a foundation that supports that idea and build an organization to support it. This year, Montana's education advocates and legislature recognized that idea and efforts as a way forward and worked together to allocate \$13.5M of CARES/ARPA funding to the OPI for Data Systems Modernization.

What you can expect next:

While transitions are never easy, the project team here at the OPI remains strong and as committed as ever to delivering on the promise of improving our data systems to better support our schools. We have experienced and talented staff who have been working on the project since day one and are working on a number of fronts:

The Stakeholder Engagement solicitation closed last week and responses are being evaluated. We are still on track for the stakeholder engagement activities to commence in January.

The Consulting Services Firm RFP is currently at State Procurement undergoing final review before release later this month.

The OPI is currently in contract negotiations with the selected vendor (RAND Systems) for a new Educator Licensure System and we are still on track to commence work on the project in January, with the new system up and running by late spring 2022.

Each of us comes to an organization with a clock and at some point we must leave and begin a new adventure. That time has come for me. We must make way for those who will come after us just as those before made way for us. To all those who came before, those who journeyed with me, and those who will come after, thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Sweeney

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Sweeney".